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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

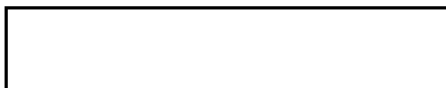
MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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28 May 1967



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Information as of 1600
28 May 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Ground activity in South Vietnam was light over the weekend; however, indications that the Communist summer offensive is about to get under way continue to be received.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Small-unit actions, terrorist attacks, and mortar barrages constituted the bulk of enemy activity in South Vietnam during 27 and 28 May (Paras. 1-2).
There was increasing evidence [redacted]

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[redacted] that a country-wide offensive may begin during the period 29-31 May (Paras. 3-4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
On 26 May the Directorate submitted a letter to the Constituent Assembly recommending changes in the presidential and upper house election laws (Paras. 1-3). The government had apparently previously threatened to take steps to dissolve the Assembly if it insisted on the 17 December date for upper house elections, but progovernment deputies feel that submission of the Directorate's recommendation will avert such a step (Paras. 4-5). [redacted]

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Dai Viet Party's candidate has reportedly received pledges of substantial support (Para. 8).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

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Two SU-76 assault guns, not previously seen outside the Hanoi area, were photographed just north of the DMZ [redacted] (Para. 3).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Communist military activity in South Vietnam over the weekend was confined to terrorist attacks, harassment fire, and small-unit actions.

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indicate, however, that Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces would open a country-wide summer offensive in the next few days.

2. Operational reports from I Corps for the period 27-28 May described an engagement between a US Army company and an unknown Communist force in which one US soldier and 42 enemy troops were killed. A US Marine position northwest of Quang Tri city was harassed with mortar fire but no casualties or damage were reported. A Popular Force outpost, also near Quang Tri, was mortared on 27 May and four South Vietnamese militiamen were killed. In II and III Corps, 100 rounds of 60-mm. mortar fire were directed against a "New Life" hamlet 40 miles northwest of Pleiku, killing 28 persons, including 14 civilians, and wounding 29 others. A terrorist attack on a Vietnamese home on the outskirts of Tay Ninh killed seven and wounded nine.

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3.

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Although there is no new evidence concerning the precise timing of the enemy's summer campaign in this region, information

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strongly suggests that VC/NVA forces will launch significant military operations in the very near future. In northern Quang Tri Province the enemy is believed to be capable of attacking allied units with up to three divisions.

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4. Similar indications of imminent enemy action have been received in II and III corps. Communist forces have been concentrating in western

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Pleiku Province during recent weeks and are capable of undertaking operations in the central highlands area with one division plus two regiments. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the enemy's summer campaign in III Corps will get under way on 29 May. The status and mission of VC/NVA forces in this region is less well defined than in the northern provinces, but it is estimated that the enemy is capable of conducting coordinated attacks with up to seven infantry regiments in the north-western and central III Corps area.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In a letter sent on 26 May to Constituent Assembly Chairman Phan Khac Suu, the Directorate proposed certain changes in the presidential and senatorial election laws, which it has been reviewing over the past week. The Directorate further asked that the upper and lower house electoral laws completed by 3 June and 16 June, respectively. The letter, which will be debated by the Assembly on 29 May, did not reopen the possibility of providing for a runoff election if no presidential candidate wins a minimum percentage of the total vote.

2. The letter suggested, first, the deletion of the provision stipulating that presidential candidates must be "introduced" by 30 Assembly deputies and/or provincial and municipal councilors. It argued that this stipulation is unconstitutional and undemocratic, and does not allow the elected village councilors to introduce candidates.

3. The Directorate's second request concerned the date of the upper house election, which the Assembly has set for 17 December, three months after the presidential election. Pointing out that the government had publicly committed itself to holding simultaneous elections in early September for both the president and the upper house, the letter urged that this commitment be honored, with lower house elections to follow a month later. The Directorate further warned that a "political vacuum of serious proportions" could result if there is a prolonged period between the installation of a president and the election of the national assembly, and that separate elections would be more costly, in terms of both money and the lives of soldiers assigned to provide security for voting stations.

4. Although the tone of the letter was polite, the Directorate is apparently particularly annoyed at the Assembly's postponement of the upper house elections. Premier Ky, in a Vietnam press interview

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on 26 May, emphasized the necessity of holding elections at the same time, citing the reasons given in the Directorate's letter. The Directorate's strong feelings on the issue are further pointed up by the remarks of a military deputy in the Assembly, who reported on 23 May that if the Assembly remained adamant in retaining the December election date--which in effect extends its own life--the government was prepared to retaliate by inducing the resignation of enough deputies to discredit the Assembly. This in turn would give the government an excuse to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and to call for immediate national assembly elections. According to this deputy, 14 military and seven minority deputies and five others closely aligned with the government would obey such an order.

5. According to a second deputy, however, submission of the Directorate's letter may avert such a drastic step. This deputy, a civilian, reported that several progovernment deputies had advised National Police director Nguyen Ngoc Loan on 22 May that submission of a letter expressing the government's desires would give its supporters in the Assembly a chance to effect a rescheduling of the elections.

6. Assembly Chairman Suu is favorably disposed toward holding the elections simultaneously, according to a Vietnam press story of 26 May.

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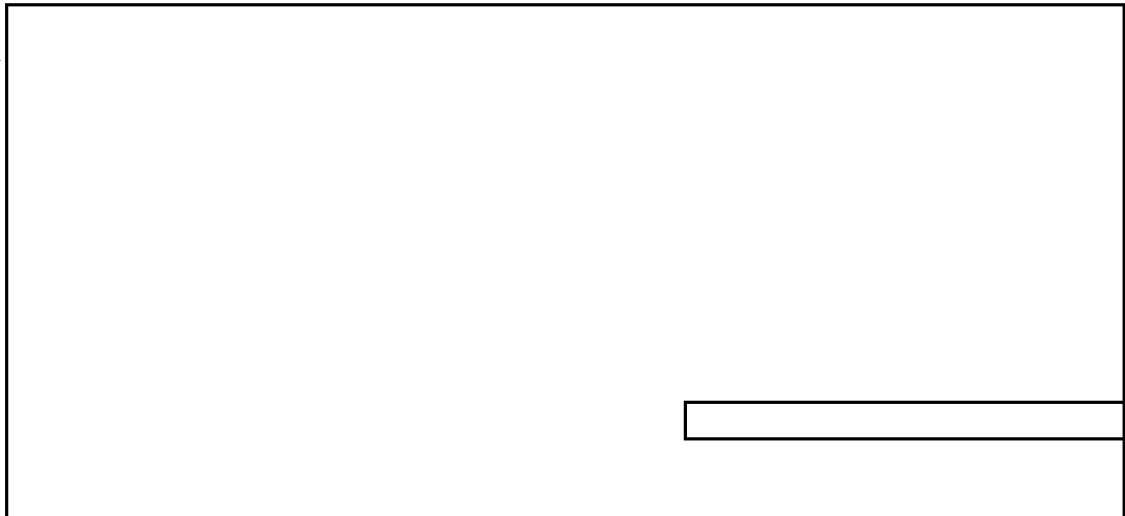
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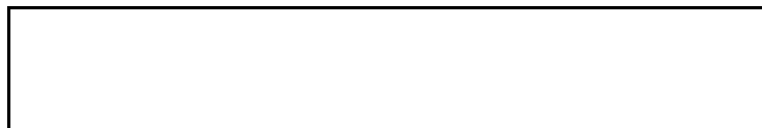
Ha Thuc Ky Wins Additional Support.

8. Revolutionary Dai Viet Party presidential candidate Ha Thuc Ky [redacted] [redacted] has reportedly received pledges of support from factions of both the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects, which could bring him possibly 200,000-300,000 votes in the delta. If true, such pledges may influence Ky, whose main area of support is in the far northern provinces, to persist in his candidacy rather than try to strike a deal with some other candidate, as has been speculated.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

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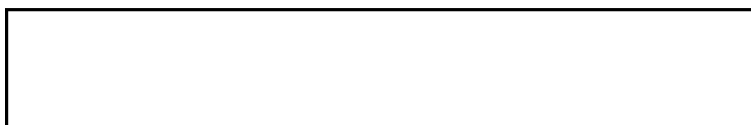
Assault Guns Detected Near the DMZ

3. Photography [redacted] showed two tank-type vehicles, believed to be SU-76 self-propelled assault guns, situated about six miles north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). North Vietnam has been credited with about 20 of these Soviet-made infantry support weapons, but none have been observed out of the Hanoi area before.

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4. The SU-76 is a relatively small, lightly armored, tracked vehicle equipped with a 76-mm. gun that can hit targets at a range of about eight miles. These weapons could be used by PAVN units in the vicinity of the DMZ to shell US gun emplacements or to support major troop actions. Their introduction into this area is consistent not only with the increased employment of heavier weapons by Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces but also with indications that the Communists' summer offensive in South Vietnam is about to begin.

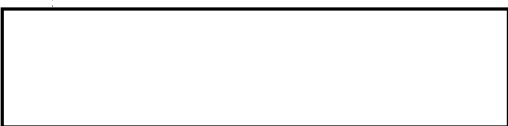
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